kept in abeyance as conscious decision by the concerned Ministries, court cases etc.

(d) The Government has issued detailed guidelines indicating the defined time frame for filling up such posts in CPSEs so that the Public Enterprises Selection Board recommendations should be made at least 6 months in advance of the date of occurrence of vacancies and are sent to the concerned Ministry/Department for completing other formalities.

Exploration by Cairn in Ganga Basin

†2352. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Cairn Energy India Private Ltd., a foreign company, has been assigned the task of exploring petroleum in the Ganga basin and other areas in Bihar on contract basis;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the company has started its function involving the expenditure of about 200 crore rupees; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. One exploration block namely GV-ONN--2001/1 has been contracted to M/s Cairn Energy under IV round of NELP.

(a) and (c) An investmentof US$ 0.52 Million has been incurred in this block till 31st March 2006.

Disparity amongst contract workers

2353. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of workers employed as contract workers by ONGC at Ahmedabad, Mehsana, Baroda and Ankleshwar in Gujarat.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the details of daily wages/monthly wages paid to contract workers at the above places;

(c) whether it is a fact that a Special Mention was made in the Rajya Sabha on 8.12.2006 on this matter;

(d) the action that have been taken in this regard to give justice to workers in Gujarat;

(e) whether it is also a fact that workers at Mumbai and Assam are getting higher wages than those in Gujarat; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) ONGC does not engage contract workers directly for its activities. However, it awards certain categories of works/jobs to Contractors through Job/Service contracts with complete responsibilities.

At present the number of contract workers engaged by the Contractors in the following work centres of ONGC in Gujarat are given below:

Work-centres	No. of workers engaged by Contractors
Ahmedabad	1959
Mehsana	2934
Baroda	315
Ankleshwar	2157

(b) As per the rate fixed by the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central Ahmedabad), the daily wages (*w.e.f.* 01.04.2006) being paid by the Contractors to their workers at the above places in Gujarat are as under:

(Wages in Rs.)

Category	Places		
	Ahmedabad	Baroda	Mehsana and Ankleshwar
Un-skilled	95.40	95.40	88.75
Semi-skilled	97.98	96.90	96.40
Skilled	125.53	118.42	101.08
Highly skilled	148.08	145.97	118.42

The above Minimum Wages have been notified by the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central Ahmedabad) in accordance with Minimum Wages Act 1948. In addition, contract labourers engaged in the activities of ONGC in the state of Gujarat are being paid Rs.50/- per person per day as per the order of Deputy Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) Mumbai.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The contract workers in Gujarat are getting the wages as per minimum wages notified by the appropriate/competent authorities.

(e) and (f) In Mumbai, the workers engaged by the Contractors in ONGC activities under new contracts are paid minimum wages as notified by the appropriate/competent Authorities. These rates are marginally higher than the rates for Gujarat.

In case of Assam, the Contractors engaged in ONGC activities are paying minimum wages to the contract workers in accordance with wages notified by the appropriate/competent authorities. These rates are lower than the minimum wages paid in Gujarat.

Oil and gas reserves in Orissa

†2354. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation has explored huge deposits of oil and natural gas in the North East of Orissa;

(b) if so, by when this gas would be utilized; and

(c) whether it would be possible to utilize this gas for the proposed oil refinery in Paradeep?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has discovered gas in Mahanadi offshore block MN-OSN-2000/2 of the Orissa coast, awarded to consortium of ONGC, GAIL, IOC and OIL with ONGC as operator.

(b) The utilization of gas can only be considered after completion of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.